

known for their sophistication, dedication to their faith and their nation, and hospitality to visitors.

During the Armenian genocide, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were forced by the Ottoman Turks into the deserts of the Middle East. In the midst of their suffering, some Armenians were taken in and given protection by many people in the Middle East, and Armenian communities still exist in that part of the world.

Israel and Armenia continue to work on expanding and improving their bilateral relations. While there have admittedly been some differences, Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian visited Israel late last year, at which time the governments of both countries emphasized their commitment to increased cooperation.

But, Mr. Speaker, while government-to-government initiatives continue, some of the most important advances come from the person-to-person relationships. Tuesday night's event at the Armenian Embassy is a testimony to that effort.

I want to pay particular tribute to two individuals who have done so much to further these important contacts, Annie Totah and Aris Mardirossian, the co-chairs of the 30th Anniversary Celebration. I also salute all of the Armenian and American Friends of the Hebrew University and all of the leaders in the Armenian and Jewish communities who have worked so hard for this very worthy cause.

Tuesday's reception will be followed by several noteworthy events in Jerusalem, including the International Conference on the Armenians in Jerusalem on May 24 through 26, a symposium for the Israeli public on June 6, and a symposium on the Armenian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with guest of honor His Beatitude Mesrop II, Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, and an alumnus of the Armenian Studies Program.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to one of the leading figures in the media, ABC news anchor Peter Jennings. On last Friday's broadcast, Mr. Jennings presented as part of his series on the century a poignant and powerful report on the Armenian genocide. In a century in which genocide has been a recurring horror, from the Nazis to Cambodia to Rwanda to the Balkans, it is important that all of us, in politics, in the media, in the field of education, and in other walks of life, be aware of what happened to the Armenian people 84 years ago.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE FAA, DOT IG, NTSB AND AVIATION SAFETY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, on March 10, 1999, the House Appropriations subcommittee on Transportation held a hearing on the topic of aviation safety. At that hearing, Jane Garvey, administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) testified, as did Ken Mead, Department of Transportation inspector general (IG), and Jim Hall, chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Last year, domestic air carriers had an excellent safety record: no passengers died on U.S. commercial flights. Many worked diligently to make safety a priority, and in the transportation appropriations subcommittee we have focused our efforts on aviation safety as well as all transportation modes.

In listening to the testimony prepared by each agency, it appeared that there was a difference of opinion in some areas with regard to the progress being made in aviation safety. Therefore, I requested that the IG and NTSB review the FAA's testimony and the FAA review the testimony of the IG and NTSB. In addition, I asked each to respond to the comments made by the others. I have provided this information for the FEDERAL REGISTER.

In general, the oversight agencies (NTSB and IG) believe that the FAA could be moving more aggressively in the referenced areas of aviation safety. For example, the NTSB noted that the FAA should be moving more quickly to ensure that aircraft registered in the United States have new flight data recorders. Similarly, the IG points out that draft regulations seeking to reduce the number of runway incursions have not yet been published while the number of runway incursions continues to rise.

Both oversight agencies suggest that the FAA should use more realistic measures of aviation safety. For example, the IG notes that a good measure of airport security is not the number of new explosive detection machines purchased and distributed, but the number of bags screened by the machines. After all, it's one thing to purchase and place explosive detection machines and it is quite another to put them into service and screen bags.

For its part, the FAA agrees that more should be done in the areas of runway incursions, airport security and project oversight.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the FAA will continue to work with the IG, NTSB and the aviation industry to fund and implement additional safety initiatives. The safety record of the industry last year was good, but we must remain vigilant in our efforts to improve the safety of the traveling public. As chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee, I am committed, as I know all members of the subcommittee are, to do what we can to make sure that transportation safety remains a priority.

OIG COMMENTS ON FAA'S STATEMENT

We have the following comments on FAA's statement before the Subcommittee on Transportation, Committee on Appropriations.

I. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL MODERNIZATION

FAA's statement gives the impression that final deployment of the HOST and Oceanic Computer System Replacement for Phase 1 hardware has been completed. However, final

deployment has not yet occurred and is currently planned to be complete by October 1999.

II. SECURITY

FAA's testimony on deploying explosives detection systems state that FAA has been very effective in getting advance explosives detection systems up and running. FAA's statement cites the fact that security equipment for checked baggage has been installed at over 30 airports, and that trace explosive detection devices for carry-on bags are being used at more than 50 airports.

The issue is not whether security equipment has been installed at more than 30 airports or whether the equipment has been "procured", "installed" or is "operational." In our opinion, the true measure of effectiveness is the number of fully operational, FAA-certified bulk explosives detection machines in use at Category X and I airports that are screening at or near the demonstrated mean capacity of 125 bags per hour per machine. In our opinion, this usage rate is reasonable as it includes time to resolve alarms and is just more than half of the certified rate of 225 bags per hour.

Accordingly, our message to Congress in the past 2 years has focused on the underutilization of explosives detection equipment at this country's largest airports. In our opinion, it is ultimately the number of bags screened that makes the difference in aviation security, not the number of explosives detection machines installed.

FAA also stated that it continues to expand the use of realistic operational testing of the aviation security system. While FAA may be expanding the use of realistic operational testing, much of the testing to date has not been "realistic."

In our recently completed audit of Secretary of Checked Baggage, we found that checked baggage security testing by over 300 FAA security field agents assigned to FAA regions was limited to air carrier compliance with manual profiling and positive passenger bag marching requirements. Also, at the time of our audit, only a few "red team"¹ security agents assigned to FAA Headquarters were testing the new automated passenger profiling systems, explosives detection equipment, and equipment operators. Therefore, red team testing of the new checked baggage security requirements has been infrequent, limited to specific testing criteria, and applied to only a few air carriers.

In prior audits, we found similar conditions. For example, in 1993 and 1996, we reported that FAA testing of airport access control was ineffective (not realistic or aggressive) and, in 1998, we reported that FAA testing of air carrier compliance with cargo security requirements was not comprehensive. We noted certain compliance requirements were omitted from the test plans.

Current OIG efforts indicate little improvement. For example, in our current audit of airport Access Control, we found FAAs airport access control assessments were limited in scope, included little testing of controls, and were conducted without using a standard testing protocol.

Our test results confirm the importance of a standard test protocol that includes realistic and aggressive testing procedures. In a majority of our tests involving airport access control, we successfully penetrated secure areas and boarded a large number of passenger and cargo aircraft. The majority of individuals we encountered failed to challenge us for unauthorized access. FAA recognizes that improvements are needed and, on

¹ Red team refers to a group of security agents assigned to FAA's Civil Aviation Security Special Activities Office.